

Cry

by Elfpen

Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Characters: Gobber, Hiccup

Status: Completed

Published: 2013-06-29 17:44:21

Updated: 2013-06-29 17:44:21

Packaged: 2016-04-26 15:26:42

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,516

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: It takes a while for the magnitude of Hiccup's injury to catch up with him. When it does, Gobber has been waiting there to help all along.

Cry

When Hiccup had lost his leg, years ago, he'd surprised the entire village with how quickly he accustomed himself to it. Yes, it hurt him, yes, he'd had more than one sleepless night because of the aches and spasms of his leg while it healed. But overall, Hiccup seemed completely unshaken by the fact that a piece of him had been lobbed off and replaced by a stick of wood and metal. Perhaps it was the prevalence of amputees on Berk, Stoick would tell himself and anyone who mentioned it. Perhaps it'd been because Toothless was already a cripple, and it make it easier for Hiccup to accept. Perhaps it was Hiccup's youth, his tendency to bounce back from anything no worse for the wear.

Stoick would laugh about it occasionally, how unfazed Hiccup had been in the face of a crippling injury. Especially during the first few months after Hiccup woke up, he'd laugh and joke "mostly from pure relief" with Gobber about how Hiccup had become Berk's most passive amputee. Gobber would smile for the sake of the chief, but he wouldn't laugh. He would watch Hiccup with a sad, unreadable expression.

Years passed. Hiccup's leg was no longer something of note; it was just another part of him. Just as Gobber could switch out his hands every few minutes with no one batting an eyelid, Hiccup's metal foot could _tap tap tap_ on the floor of the mead hall, and no one would notice, not even enough for a glance. Even Stoick forgot, nowadays, unless Hiccup's leg somehow went missing and he'd have to hobble downstairs on crutches to ask his father about it. Still, even after everyone else let the matter die, Gobber would still occasionally peer over at the boy. He'd purse his lips and wait, and eventually

sigh and look away. No one noticed.

Hiccup was sixteen, nearly seventeen, when he hit his major growth spurt. It was a long time in the coming, too, because he'd hardly grown at all since he was ten, and was inches and inches behind his peers. But then he shot up, and within a matter of months, was the tallest one of his class. It was a disconcerting and uncomfortable experience for those around him, but for Hiccup, it was even more so.

Growing lanky limbs and long bones is uncomfortable enough on its own; but when one of your limbs is trying to grow back into something that is no longer there, it becomes agony. Hiccup knew what growing pains were, and he also knew how his leg could hurt when the weather shifted. It'd been late winter when he'd begun to grow, and when the tumultuous spring weather rolled around, he still had plenty of growing left to do. Between trying to grow itself back and weather that was constantly reminding it that it couldn't, Hiccup's left leg had begun twisting and pulling and spasming horribly.

It was painful. Very painful, although Hiccup didn't like telling people that. Stoick knew, because Hiccup would come down in the morning with dark circles under his eyes and it would explain why Stoick had thought he'd heard someone crying out in pain the night before. Most everyone else in the village " Hiccup's classmates included " knew that Hiccup was often tired and did not come out as much as he used to, but most of them just shrugged and chalked it up to him being a growing boy whose body had stolen all of his energy. Gobber knew, but he'd never said anything beyond a piece of advice here and there about tending to his leg. He kept his distance, only watched. He was waiting to help, Stoick could see, even if his son couldn't. Gobber had been watching Hiccup for a long time, waiting for something to tell him that it was alright to help. But exactly what he was waiting for, Stoick hadn't the slightest idea.

He'd find out eventually, after the first truly warm spring morning of May, when Gobber finally saw what he'd been waiting for.

Hiccup had been helping Gobber in the forge, as was typical this time of year. Winter weather made smithing uncomfortable, to say the least. Through the hardest half of the winter, the forge was put to rest until warmer weather prevailed, and come springtime, there were always plenty of orders to catch up on.

Before winter, Gobber had invested in making a second anvil for Hiccup, so the two of them could work at the same time without stepping on each other's toes. He couldn't have timed it better, either, because Hiccup was finally tall enough and growing big enough to use an anvil for extended amounts of time without hurting himself. Gobber had seen his stamina on more than one occasion in the weeks before, so when Hiccup suddenly winced and let his hammer fall off-kilter, it made Gobber look up.

"You alright there, Hic?" He asked, not stilling his own hammer. Hiccup readjusted the hammer stiffly in his hand and nodded.

"Yeah, fine," He gritted, and didn't sound entirely sure of himself. Taking a deep breath, he began hammering again. He remained fine for long enough that Gobber forgot about the slip. But then, the clanging rhythm of Hiccup's hammer was broken again when he dropped it

altogether and it thudded against the floor. Gobber did stop hammering that time, and looked over at his apprentice with concern.

"Hiccup?" The boy didn't respond. He had his head bent over so all Gobber could see was his hair and his nose beyond it. His hands wrapped around either end of the anvil edge, clenched white. Gobber glanced at his left leg, which he saw twitch at the same time Hiccup tensed. "Your leg, lad?" He asked quietly. Hiccup nodded, but said nothing. Gobber watched him for a moment, but when he didn't move, resumed hammering. Hiccup didn't appreciate being stared at, even by someone as understanding as Gobber. He'd keep an eye on him without ogling. And so he did, casting a concerned eye over at him between hammerswings.

It took a while, but eventually, Hiccup straightened up again. But instead of reaching again for his hammer, he shuffled halfheartedly away from the anvil. "Gobber," He called, and the blacksmith stopped hammering so he could hear better.

"Hmm?" He asked, and was given pause by the weary look in his apprentice's eyes.

"I'm just going toâ€¦" Hiccup blinked several times, waving his hand unnecessarily around. "sit down. For a bit." His voice sounded odd to Gobber, like he was trying to swallow something and couldn't.

"Alright," He said, confused but kind, "Take your time." And resumed hammering as Hiccup limped over to his workroom and closed the curtain shut behind him.

After a few more minutes, Gobber finished shaping the sword he'd been working on. He set it down in the slack tub and brushed the sweat off his forehead. Sighing, he went over to his books see how many more orders remained undone. Then, without hammer clanging and hot metal hissing, Gobber heard something that made his heart fall.

Stepping carefully, he went over to Hiccup's workroom and lifted the curtain. "Hiccup?" He called, and the crying that he'd heard abruptly stopped. "You alright, lad?" When there was no answer, he stepped inside and let the curtain fall closed behind him. Once inside, he could see Hiccup sitting in one corner. His prosthetic lie detached on the floor, and while one hand knotted at the edge of his leather apron, the other held his bent head, so Gobber couldn't see his face. He was holding his brow so tightly, his hand shook. He breathed in through his nose and his shoulders shook involuntarily. Gobber suddenly wondered how long he'd been crying without Gobber hearing it.

"It's so stupid," Hiccup said in a thick voice. "It's soâ€¦" He had to swallow back a sob, and gripped his apron harder in an effort to control himself. "I'm sorry," He told Gobber, because he was only a year or two away from being a grown man, and here he was, bawling and snot-faced.

"What on earth for?" Gobber asked him, dumbfounded.

"Iâ€¦" Hiccup shook his head and shrugged, and sniffed in again, trying not let his shaking shoulders have their way. "Itâ€¦ it's been

nearly four years. Four years since I lost it." He had to pause occasionally to breathe and keep the tears away, but didn't dare even glance up at his mentor. "Ever since I lost my leg, but I know it's my face twisted up, and for a moment Gobber thought he was going to lose the battle, but then he continued, "it still hurts. And it's always hurt, but not like this, and now, I, oh, it's so stupid," He let out a huff of frustration that sounded pathetic through his tears. "It's been four years, and I've always known, but I think I just only just recently." He sniffed through a sob again, gripping his head harder. This pause was longer than the others. At long last, he brought his head up and looked at Gobber, eyes red and teary, face anguished. "I'm never going to really get it back, am I?" he asked, voice strained by tears.

Gobber had been waiting for this for years, but that didn't mean he was happy to finally see it. Without a single word, Gobber stepped over and used his good arm to hug Hiccup tightly to himself. Face smashed against a massive shoulder, Hiccup couldn't hold the tears back anymore, and began crying into Gobber's shirt, shoulders shaking but trying desperately to keep himself from making too much noise.

"No," Gobber told him gently, "No, you won't." Hiccup cried just a little bit harder. "And that's why this is alright," Gobber told him, using his hand to pat Hiccup on the back of the head. "go on and cry, lad, it's alright to cry."

So he did. He made an utter mess of Gobber's shirt and vest, but then, Gobber was a Viking, and a rough one to boot. He didn't care a lick about clothes when his apprentice was broken and weeping.

"W-why," Hiccup pulled away slightly after a while, "why does it hurt so much?" He looked down at his leg. "I-I can walk, I can take the pain, s'not so bad but why does it hurt so much to know that it's gone?"

"Because it was a part of you," Gobber said, arm still around Hiccup's shoulders. "And no matter how good that prosthetic is, you'll always miss it a bit. Of course you'll mourn it. I was beginning to wonder if you ever would," Gobber said. Hiccup wiped his face and looked up at his mentor, confused.

"What do you mean?"

Gobber sighed and sat down next to Hiccup, who had to scoot over slightly to make room. "I've told you a hundred time how I lost my hand and foot, eh?"

"Well, yeah," Hiccup said easily, because it was true.

"What I never told you, of course, was that afterwards, I cried like a baby about it."

"You?" Hiccup looked up, as though seeing his mentor from a different light. He'd never seen Gobber cry. "You did?"

Gobber let out a laugh, if only because of Hiccup's confused expression. "How could I not? Two limbs gone, just like that. It's a hard thing for anyone, of course I would've cried. That's why, when you

lost yours years ago, and bounced right back afterward, I wondered if you weren't a bit touched in the head." He smiled just slightly for his apprentice, but Hiccup was still sullen-faced and teary. Gobber shook his head and sighed. "I don't care how many stumpers we have in Berk, Hiccup, nor how many we'll ever have, I promise you that each and every one of them have spent their time mourning what they lost. It's just a part of the process."

"The process of what?"

Gobber looked thoughtful, and shrugged. "The process of learning to live without."

Something he'd said must've set Hiccup off again, because his face started screwing up in tears again and he tried to hide his face in embarrassment. Gobber only drew him closer, back to his shoulder. "Just like that," He said, patting Hiccup's back as the sobs returned. "It's alright, lad." He just held him there for a while, hugged tight against his shoulder. Eventually, Hiccup pulled away, sniffing, and looked down at his lap. Gobber stood.

"Just one minute," He said, and hobbled out of the door. He returned with a handkerchief and a roll of bedding. He laid it out on the wooden bench beneath the window. "Go on, then," he said, "I'll finish today's orders. You rest here. I figure you don't want the village seeing you walk back home all red-eyed, eh?" He smiled, and Hiccup blushed. Gobber shook his head. "Eh, teenaged pride."

Hiccup tried to stand and walk, but he'd forgotten his prosthetic on the ground. Eyes bugging, he shot sideways toward a fall. Gobber caught him, and picked him up easily, even though Hiccup was bigger than he used to be, and set him down on the bed. With his good hand, he untied Hiccup's smithing apron and tossed it over a shoulder.

"Thanks, Gobber," Hiccup said, somewhat awkwardly because he still had tears all over his face. He found a comfortable spot on the makeshift bed and laid down. Gobber nodded gently, but didn't say anything. Before he left, he bent over to move Hiccup's prosthetic closer to the bed so he wouldn't have to fish for it when he woke up.

"Good lad," He said quietly as he shut the curtain behind him. Sniffing once himself, Gobber cleared his throat and went back to fetch his new sword out of the slack. He exchanged his tong hands for an empty stump end that allowed him to hold the sword directly by the tang. Winding up the grindstone, Gobber sat down and tossed one last look at Hiccup's workroom before he turned his focus back to work.

He'd waited four years to help Hiccup in ways his father and friends never could. Gobber had never been truly thankful about having lost an arm and a leg, but at that very moment, they felt like medals of honor. At very least, the lesson he'd learned with them helped him teach a boy that sometimes, it was alright to cry.

End
file.